

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-amended patent application are respectfully requested. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of Claims 1-10, 14, 16-30, 36-43, and 46-60 and the indication that Claims 11-13, 15, 31-33, 35, 44 and 45 are allowable.

As an initial matter, the Examiner correctly points out an error in claiming the priority of a prior U.S. Patent Application No. 09/575,811 filed by the Applicant on May 22, 2000. This error appears to be inadvertent in nature and was made by the Applicant's prior patent counsel Paul Davis. As such, the undersigned respectfully requests the Patent Office to correct this error in a separate request filed concurrently. Upon entry of this correction, this application claims the priority from the U.S. provisional application, 60/309,220 filed on July 31, 2001.

In connection with this correction in the priority, the specification has been amended to delete the statement of the improper priority claim to the prior U.S. Patent Application No. 09/990,196. No new matter is added in the amended specification.

Examiner further indicates that FIGS. 1(a), 1(b), 2, 3(a), (b), and 4(a)-(c) be labeled as "prior art." FIGS. 1(a) and

1(b) are so labeled as originally filed. Attached herewith are sheets with FIGS. 2, 3(a), (b), and 4(a)-(c) that are marked up with the proposed changes in red ink. The undersigned will prepare and file a set of formal drawings upon the Examiner's approval of the changes.

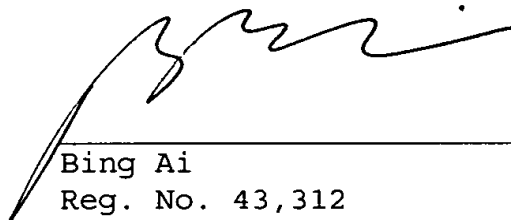
Claims have been amended to place the application in condition for allowance. Claims 61-85 have been canceled to obviate all associated rejections and objections. Claims 6 and 26 have been amended to correct informalities thereof and to overcome the objections raised by the Examiner. Claims 11, 15, 31, 35, and 44 have been amended to overcome the associated rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. These amendments address all objections and rejections in the pending claims.

Upon entry of the above amendments, Claims 1-60 are pending and are patentable.

In view of the above, all objections and rejections have been either obviated or overcome. The application is now in full condition for allowance and an official notice of allowance is respectfully solicited.

This response is filed timely and no fee is believed to be due for this filing. Please apply any applicable charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,



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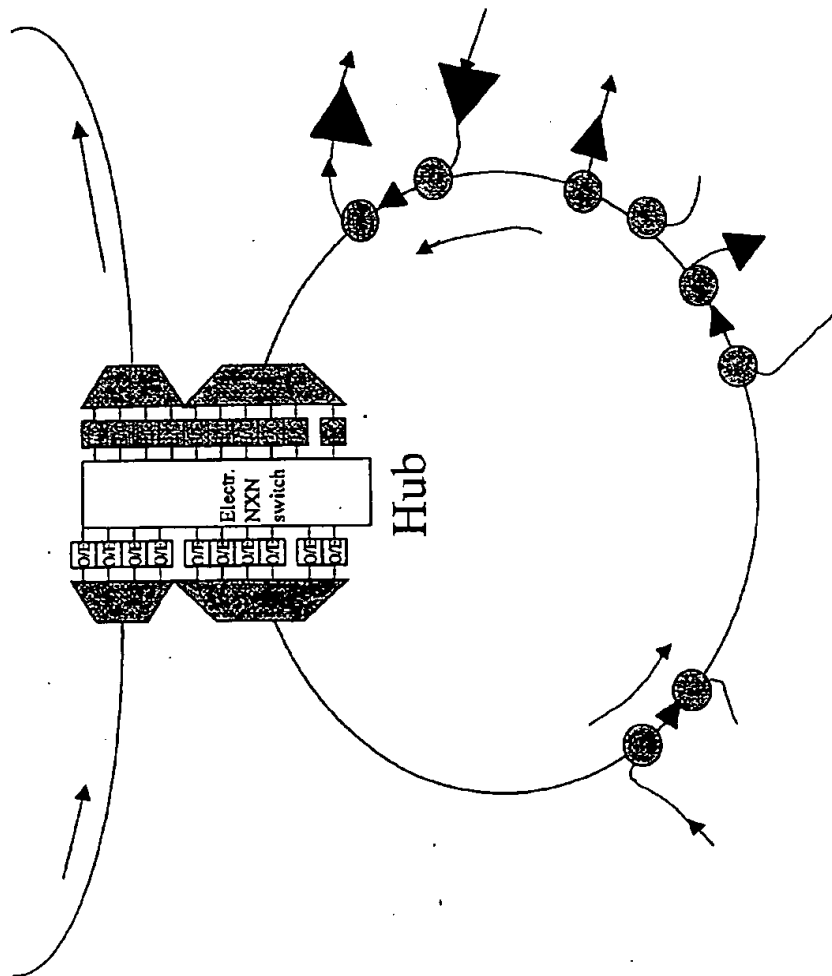
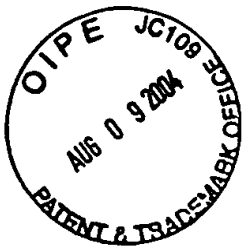


Fig. 2
(prior art)

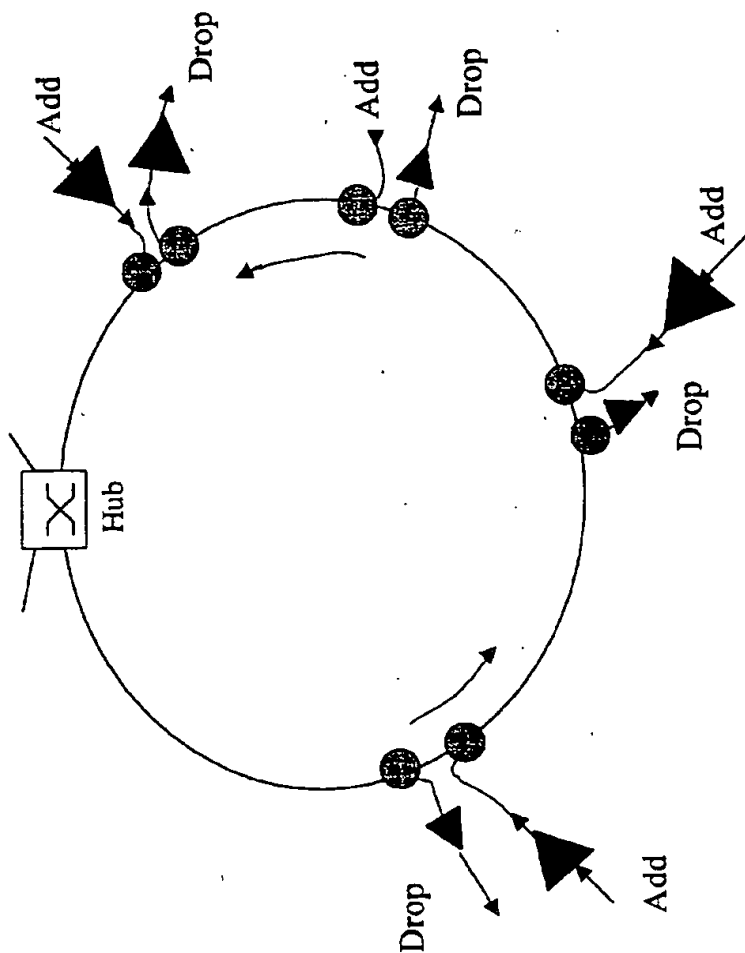


Fig.3(a)
(prior art)

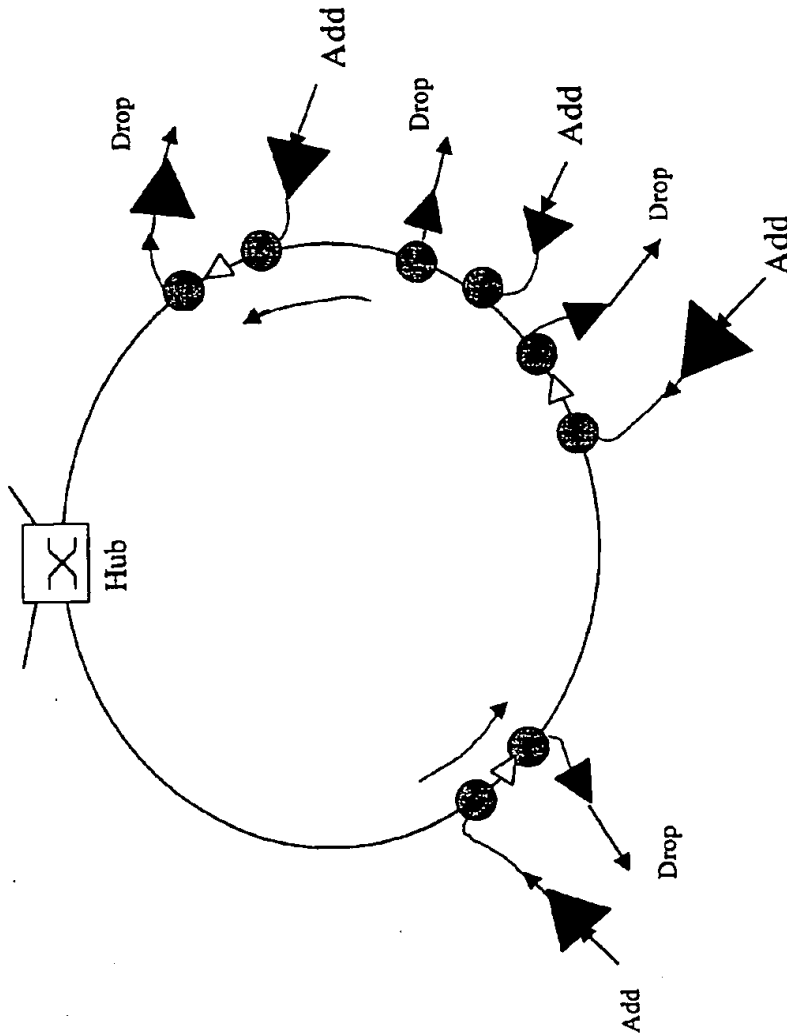


Fig.3(b)
(prior art)

